The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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April Fools.

He who mourneth day by day
That his youth doth pass away
Like the blossoms on the tree,
Sure an April fool must be;
For the blossoms fade and die
That the tree may fruit supply;
So, youth fled, we e'er should find
Fruitless wisdom left behind.

He who lives to garner gold,
Selling what should ne'er be sold,
Bartering peace for dross, why he
Sure an April fool must be!
Many who have mourned his end
Will rejoice that they may spend;
For the ingots he may save
None will bury in his grave.

He who spurns the horny hand,
Throwing loom or tilling land,
Treating labor scornfully,
Sure an April fool is he!
Were the loom of toil bereft
Spider would weave warp and weft;
Earth and labor are allied —
Thriftless groom makes thriftless bride.

He who thinks that time hath done
All for which time was begun,
Nor its onward course doth see,
Sure an April fool must be!
Night but slowly melts away,
Daylight cometh ray by ray;
Time must work creation's plan,
And man be victor over man.

When little ones worry,
Their parents are sorry,
And all who are near them look sad;
But when they are good,
And smile as they should,
Their friends are contented and glad.
How much better it is to be cheerful and sing,
Than to deserve to be called a cross little thing!

For the Myrtle.

The Birthday Party.

PART II.

At tea time I was allowed to have out my set of small china tea things, and then it was great fun to see Lizzie Holland sending up her cup for more tea, till at last we counted eight cupfuls that she had drank, and the slices of cake, the funny biscuits, preserves and fruit that she ate—let me try and forget! Annie several times cautioned her that she had had enough, but Lizzie only said in reply that she *must* eat, because it was my birthday.

Miss Pink Dress was unfortunate enough to spill some tea in her lap, and whilst Clorinda, who sat near her, was drying it off for her, Annie and I looked at each other and smiled. Miss Pink Dress discovering us in the act began to cry and said she wanted to go away because we were jealous of her having the prettiest frock. This only made us laugh the more, at which Miss Pink Dress ran to find my mother, and told her that I was laughing at her again. I could not deny this, so I was told to leave the table, and very much ashamed I felt to have so many eyes on me as I took a chair and sat by myself at a short distance from the rest. Clorinda whispered to Cæsarina,

"Isn't it too bad that she should be punished on her birthday?"

"Yes," replied Cæsarina loudly, and looking straight at Miss Pink Dress, "but it is all the fault of that little telltale. I hope she will spoil her dress *quite*, and that when she goes home her aunt will punish her well."

After tea they all crowded round me and kissed me, and then went up to my mother and asked her to excuse me, and after I had been seriously spoken to, I was allowed to rejoin my companions. Soon a curtain was drawn aside, disclosing the Christmas tree in all its glory, at which there was a great jumping and clapping of hands. Lizzie gave a piercing scream of delight when she received an imitation gold watch and chain, and all the rest were delighted with what they drew excepting Miss Pink Dress, who only got a small doll in a cradle, when she burst into tears of vexation, and said that it was Annie's fault, though how that could have been has remained a mystery to this day. Angelina drew a drum and a trumpet, and insisted on marching about the room, performing on them with all her might.

"See," said one of the boys, "the little monk is going to turn soldier."

But she cared for nobody's jokes, and was so lively that she was soon the favorite of the evening. Every one was merry; even little Martha forgot her gravity sufficiently to play at bo-peep with a gentleman who she said was the darling of her heart. We had "Blind Man's Buff," "Hunt the Slipper," "Oranges and Lemons say the bells of St. Clement's," and "Here comes an old Soldier," and we refreshed ourselves with lemonade, custard, fruit and cake. Once the boys went slyly out of the room and re-appeared covered with sheets, and their faces whitened, whereat we pretended to be very much frightened and ran about screaming. One of the boys caught hold of Miss Pink Dress, who struggled and fought very hard, when some of the gathers of her frock tore out, and she went up to Mrs. Cheney and said that she wanted to be taken away. We were sorry to see her in so much trouble, and after her frock had been mended asked her to come and play with us at some other game, but she declared that Annie and I had told the boy to tear her frock on purpose.

"You must not say that," said my mother, "for it is an untruth."

This made her sulky, and she would answer no one who spoke to her. Mrs. Cheney tried to make her behave better, but to no purpose, and when she left, every one rejoiced to see her go.

How true it is that our conscience is our worst punishment. After awhile I noticed that Annie was seated between Octavia and Minnie, and that they whispered together, and laughed as if they did not wish me to see that they did so. Ah, what pain I felt! but I deserved it for having done the same by others as they were now doing by me. Yes! Annie was ready to make fun of me to those who were almost strangers to her. I could not have been so deceitful to her, and so I made myself miserable, but did not accuse Annie to herself, for fear of making her ashamed, or worse still of finding that she did not care, and the whole of the rest of the evening I could feel what I had perhaps caused others to suffer. Every whisper of Annie's caused me to leave the room to shed unseen tears. Once they were looking for me, and Octavia found me.

"What is the matter, dear? Why don't you play with us?"

"Because you have been laughing at me for something."

"Indeed I have not, and no one has. Who could be so rude and unkind?"

Ah, thought I, I was rude enough to laugh at others, but I said:

"Annie was whispering to you about me."

"No, dear, I was telling her of a trick we played on my sister Josephine, and she told me of a trick she was going to play upon you to-night, and she did not want you to hear, and she told all the others about it and made them laugh too. So you will come in now, and play with us, won't you?"

I was only too glad to find that I had been mistaken, but it was a lesson to me to be cautious of hurting other people's feelings. When I went to bed that night I found what considerably startled me; it was a pillow dressed up with a frock, cloak and hat of my own, and it was seated in a chair in front of the looking-glass. I discovered afterwards that this was the trick Annie meant to play me, and that after she had got up the dummy to her satisfaction, all the little girls had been taken up stairs one at a time to inspect it under a solemn promise of secrecy.

Clelia Lega Weeks.

WHO is little sunshine? The child who does not pout, or frown, or say cross words, but goes about the house laughing, smiling, singing, saying kind words and doing kind deeds. That child is little sunshine.

Only a Pin.

"MAMMA," says little Lilla, "do please tell us a story."

"And let it be a true one," adds Susy.

"Well, then, my dears, it shall be a true one. Come and listen, John, for it is not a long one; and it hides a good moral for you, which I hope you will never forget.

Only two or three days ago, an overseer in the ——— Mills found a pin, which cost the corporation about three hundred dollars."

"Was it stolen?" asked Susy. "I suppose it must have been very handsome. Was it a diamond pin?"

"Oh, no! my dear; not by any means. It was just such a pin as people buy every day, and use without stint. Here is one upon my dress."

"Such a pin as *that* cost three hundred dollars!" exclaimed John. "I don't believe it."

"But mamma says it's a true story," interposed Susy.

"Yes, I know it to be true. And this is how the pin happened to cost so much.

You know that calicoes, after they are printed and washed, are dried and smoothed by being passed over heated rollers. Well, by some mischance, a pin dropped so as to lie upon the principal roller, and, indeed, became wedged into it, the head standing out a little way from the surface. Over and over went the roller, and round and round went the cloth, winding at length upon still another roller, until the piece was measured off. Then another piece began to be dried and wound, and so on, until one hundred pieces had been counted off. These were not examined immediately, but removed from the machinery, and laid aside. When at length they came to be inspected, it was found that there were holes in every piece throughout the web, and only three-quarters of a yard apart. Now in each piece there were from thirty-five to forty-five yards; and at twelve cents a yard that would count up to about five hundred dollars. Of course, the goods could not be classed as perfect goods; so they were sold as remnants, at less than half the price they would have brought had it not been for that treacherous pin.

Now it seems to me, John, that when a boy takes for his companion a profane swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, or a lad who is untruthful, he is like the roller which took to its bosom the pin. Without his being able to help it, often, the evil influence clings to him, and leaves its mark upon everybody with whom he comes in contact. That pin damaged irreparably four hundred yards of new print; and bad company has left its trace upon thousands of unsuspecting souls. Remember, my boy, 'One sinner destroyeth much good,' and *avoid evil companions*."—*Well-Spring.*

The Trailing Arbutus.

IN April, when the days were bright,
And growing longer in their scope,
When buds were shaking off their sleep,
And all the air was full of hope;

We walked together, you and I,
In mood that sometimes pensive grew;
For memories of a gladness past,
Eclipsed the present to our view.

By crooked foot-paths faintly traced,
Our way along the fields we took;
Climbed broken fence and loosened wall,
And crossed the shallow, gliding brook.

We reached the hills, beneath whose base
The river flows with ceaseless sound,
And knowing the enchanted spot,
Knelt with our faces to the ground.

For those who come with lofty tread,
And careless, undiscerning eyes,
May often go with empty hands,
Nor find this treasure where it lies.

We brushed the withered leaves away,
Old remnants of a worn-out year,
And shouted with ecstatic glee,
"The flower is here! the flower is here."

When crowned with spoils we homeward went,
Our thoughts assumed a gayer hue;
Beneath the magic touch of spring
Belief and courage bloomed anew.

Among all blossoms of the year,
Say, where shall I another find,
Whose sweetness thus the senses charm,
Whose energies content the mind.

Nature's brave messenger, that tells
Of present good, and good to be;
Whose brief companionship excites
The brave desire in you and me

That we might cast old habits off
To let a nobler growth appear;
And greet all seasons with the thought
"The flower is here! the flower is here."

Miss Hathaway.

A MAN of subtle reasoning asked
A peasant if he knew
Where was the internal evidence
That proved the Bible true.
The terms of disputative art
Had never reached his ear.
He laid his hand upon his heart,
And only answered, "here."

For the Myrtle.

Under the Awning.

UNDER the awning as we pass by
Is a picture lovely as e'er was seen,
Though 'tis only the organ-grinder's child,
Tired at last of her tambourine, —

Foot-sore and weary with travel long
She creeps to her father's arms for rest
The child of poverty and wrong
Has one safe place, on his loving breast.

Snug asleep on the organ's top,
No more a waif of the street she seems,
But a fairy princess on her throne
Lulled by music to golden dreams.

H. A. B.

For the Myrtle.

Needless Fear.

WHEN I was a child, I lived on a large farm, and was accustomed to all the stock and poultry that belong to farm-life. But I could never get on familiar terms with them, as most children do. I think I must have been born with a terror of every kind of living creature not human; at least my memory of childhood is little better than that of a succession of frights. The barnyard was more terrible than any battle-field could be now, and I used to skulk along the fences of the pastures, and no cow could turn her great mild eyes on me but my heart rose in my mouth, and I felt as if already on her horns, or if a horse chanced to prick his ears at my step I was over the top of the nearest fence quicker than it can be told. I used to take a wide sweep around our neighbor's house, on my way to school, for fear the dog might be in sight; and would no sooner have touched a hen on her nest than I would have put my hand into a rattlesnake's den. What with my fondness for little lambs and my fear of the hard heads of the old sheep, I was continually in trouble; and I took comfort with the chickens only when their mothers were securely cooped. The turkey-cock was a perfect hobgoblin, that kept me armed with a huge stick most of the time; and even then if he began his terrific gobbling and strutting towards me, I dropped my weapon in mortal fear, especially if I had anything red about my clothes, and ran to the house like the wind, no doubt screaming, though that I do not remember.

But the chief of all my terrors was the geese. Those famous Japanese geese, with their big, white downy bodies and their pink eyes, and their fierce hisses, what bug-bears they were to me! Will their poor souls be held accountable, I wonder, for all the misery they caused me? Their fat bodies were killed and eaten long ago and their spirits are at rest, no doubt, with the things that were. I bear them no ill-will now. But I wish they could have told me in those days that they did not mean half as bad as they threatened.

In fact, the geese were a nuisance to everybody, and their disposition was not improved by the treatment they received. They had no good pond to swim in and so used to get in the watering-trough and spoil the water for the horses, and then they were clubbed away. They trampled on the linen when it was laid on the grass to bleach, and were driven out of the clothes-yard with great "shooing" and clapping twenty times a day. They were always in mischief and so I think that they put on a bold face and hissed at everybody else to make believe that they were very good and everything else was very bad. That is the silliness of geese, the world over.

But against no living thing did they have such a spite, I thought, as against me. I could not appear in their sight, even to feed them, without their long necks stretching out and that fearful "s-s-s" beginning. How many times did they drive me across the barnyard, or in from the well or keep me back from the field as they stood like unconscious sentinels close beside the bars, innocently nipping at the grass and clover. I used to reconnoitre every time I went out of doors as if I was in an enemy's country, and the first warning hiss was my signal of retreat, in the most hasty and demoralized manner.

I distinctly remember one day, when I was going to school, how the geese swarmed through the gate where they had just been driven angrily away from the watering-trough, and seeing me, ran hissing and squawking after me; how I ran up the road and they half-flying after me, until it seemed to me I should never, never get away from them; how I lost my hat and got more and more frightened and suffocated until I thought I should fall down and die, and still these dreadful geese close to my skirts; and how at last the neighbor's big boy saw my fright and rushed out of the door, shouting and swinging his hat until he drove them the other way, and then picked up my hat and brushed it and sent me on to school, feeling as though I had been rescued by a hero, from a dreadful doom. I remember when I arrived at school how I took my cousin one side and told her in a breathless and mysterious way of my hair-breadth escape; and how tired and sick I felt all day from my fright.

And yet, will you believe me, children of to-day, when I tell you that all my distressing fears had no ground whatever to rest on! Never was I tossed on horn of cow, or kicked by horse or even picked by sitting hen. Never did turkey-gobbler pick my eyes out with his horrid beak, or goose flap me to death with his strong wings. In fact none of these fearful creatures ever did me any harm whatever, except that once I was gently poked over by a sheep, but that I think was accidental and more my fault than his; and the funniest thing was that on that occasion I was not in the least frightened. Yes, I had all that fear and misery, all those years, for just nothing at all! Of course I could not help it, or I thought I could not; but I suspect a great deal of the trouble we make ourselves, all through life, is just as much worth while as that.

H. A. B.

Learning to Pray.

KNEELING fair in the twilight gray,
A beautiful child was trying to pray;
His cheek on his mother's knee,
His bare little feet half-hidden,
His smile still coming unbidden,
And his heart brim full of glee.

"I want to laugh. Is it naughty? Say,
Oh, mamma! I've had such fun to-day,
I hardly can say my prayers;
I don't feel just like praying,
I want to be out-doors playing,
And run all undressed down stairs.

I can see the flowers in the garden-bed;
Shining so pretty, and sweet and red;
And Sammy is swinging, I guess.
Oh, everything is so fine out there,
I want to put it all in my prayer,
(Do you mean I can do it by 'Yes?')

When I say, 'Now I lay me,'—word for word,
It seems to me as if nobody heard,
Would 'Thank you, dear God,' be right?
He gave me my mamma,
And papa and Sammy, —
Oh, mamma! you nodded I might."

Clasping his hands and hiding his face,
Unconsciously yearning for help and grace,
The little one now began,
His mother's nod and sanction sweet,
Had led him close to the dear Lord's feet,
And his words like music ran:

"Thank you for making this home so nice,
The flowers, and folks, and my two white mice,
(I wish I could keep right on),
I thank you, too, for every day, —
Only I'm most too glad to pray,
Dear God, I think I am done.

Now, mamma, rock me,—just a minute, —
And sing the hymn with 'darling' in it.
I wish I *could* say my prayers!
When I get big, I know I can,
Oh, won't it be nice to be a man,
And stay all night down stairs!"

The mother, singing, clasped him tight,
Kissing, and cooing her fond "Good night,"
And treasured his every word,
For well she knew that the artless joy
And love of her precious, innocent boy,
Were a prayer that her Lord had heard.

Mary E. Dodge.

A Lily's Word.

MY delicate lily—
Blossom of fragrant snow,
Breathing on me from the garden—
How does your beauty grow?
Tell me what blessing the kind heavens give!
How do you find it so sweet to live?

"One loving smile of the sun
Charms me out of the mold;
One tender tear of the rain
Makes my heart unfold.
Welcome whatever the kind heavens give,
And you shall find it as sweet to live."

In General.

——The Second Baptist Church in Chicago supports five home and Mission Sunday Schools.

——There are now published in the United States over one hundred papers and magazines for juveniles; a majority of these are Sabbath School papers.

——The Sunday School in the Ohio Penitentiary Chapel meets at half-past nine in the morning, and is attended by over three hundred of the inmates.

——Fifty-seven new Sunday Schools were organized by missionaries of the American Sunday School Union in California during the year 1871.

——A little boy once stopped at a country tavern and paid for his lodgings by sawing wood instead of asking it as a gift. Fifty years later, the same boy passed the same inn as George Peabody, the banker.

——Within a few years both the Orthodox and Hicksite Friends have become quite zealous in the establishment of Sunday, or First-day Schools, and the present estimate of attendance is 65,000 pupils, and 3 000 teachers.

——Sunday Schools among the Catholics are conducted differently from those of the Protestant Churches, in that the priest has exclusive charge of the instruction, instead of the work being done by a corps of teachers. Their system has the advantage of uniformity.

——A sensible writer has just said:—"Children ought to be trained to give liberally, systematically, and as unto the Lord; to give what costs them something, in the line of effort or of self-denial, and to give it for Christ's sake. The Sunday School is the place for such training. No Sunday School is doing its full work which does not take contributions regularly from the children for benevolent purposes.

——"Would you urge a scholar every Sunday to come to Jesus?" asked a teacher of a well-known and successful Sunday School worker. "Yes," was the answer; "but not by saying over, Come to Jesus, Come to Jesus, Sunday after Sunday. I would try each Sabbath to win him to Jesus by whatever I said and did." There is an important truth in that answer.

——Rev. Dr. Sheldon, of the American Bible Society, said, at a recent Sunday School Convention in New Jersey, that from his wide acquaintance with the facts in the case, he could confidently affirm that there never was so much study of the Bible as now in the Sunday Schools of that State. And his testimony agrees with that of others acquainted with Sunday School work in other parts of the country. In no schools in the land should this study be followed up more faithfully than in those connected with our Universalist parishes. Our faith is based on the Bible. Let us see that our children are made thoroughly acquainted with it from their study of the Book of books.

——A happy world would this be, if all the people in it were true Christians. We do not mean if they all thought that the Christian religion was the true and right religion; but we mean if they all had this religion. They would then see God as a good Father, and would love him. And if they loved him they would serve him. They would see in all men their brethren, and would seek to do them good and not evil. They would follow after righteousness, not through fear of punishment, but because they loved to do right. The Bible assures us that we are to have such a world one day, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

——A writer in the New York *Independent* says:—"No Sunday School need be closed—summer, winter, spring, or autumn, on the *scholars'* account. Children live all the year round, and they are wide awake for action as long as they live. They might as well be forbidden to snowball, or coast, or skate in mid winter, to go in bathing in summer, to play ball in the spring, or to gather nuts in the autumn, out of regard for their enjoyment, as to be forbidden the Sunday School on the score of their inability or unwillingness to come to it. Only where all the children are in a state of 'suspended animation' is there a good reason for a Sunday School vacation, whether the weather be cold, hot, wet, or windy."

——The *Svuday School Times* gives a description of a remarkable Sunday School banner, made by an old lady, the superintendent's wife, whose home is a long distance from a store or post-office and beyond the preaching of the Gospel. The banner, made of an old pillow-case, is about three by four feet in size; and the frame was split from a cedar rail, and dressed and made by the old lady herself. Then she gathered flowers, mosses, and evergreens, which she pressed upon the cloth in the form of a wreath, using the white of an egg for paste and varnish. Gilt paper served for a border, and letters cut from old newspapers formed the mottoes,—"Exalt wisdom, and she shall promote you," "Give your Heart to your Creator, and your Alms to the Poor." The name of the school is spelled in the same way, and in the centre is a picture, "Christ the Consolator."

Organs.

Organs are used in most Christian churches now. Do our young readers know how long these instruments have been in use? Of course, great improvements have been made in them since they were first known.

In the Scriptures the organ is mentioned eighteen times. The instrument there meant was quite small, and could be carried from one place to another. Organs are also mentioned by Pindar five hundred years before the Christian era. The first account we have of an organ which must have been a large instrument, is one said to have been given to Charlemagne, the Roman Emperor. It is reported to have made "a noise like thunder." The earliest organ mentioned as having existed in England, was at Westminster Abbey, where there was one in the tenth century. The first organ erected in Paris was at the Church of St. Sevens. in 1358, though organs had been used in France as early as the third century. The first organs used in this country were brought from Europe. The first church organ said to have been built in New England is now in the Universalist church in Winchester, N. H. It was made by Mr. Henry Pratt in 1789. Most new churches now, however small, are furnished with organs.

A Sweet Spirit.

It is said that bees and wasps will not sting a person whose skin is imbued with honey. So that sometimes when persons have occasion to hive bees, or to take a nest of wasps, they smear their faces and hands with honey, and are not harmed. When we are annoyed with insult, or anger and abuse, a sweet spirit will prevent them from injuring us. Love will keep hatred from doing us harm.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON LXXXII

THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

"Which in time past was to the unprofitable."

SCRIPTURE,—Luke xvii. 3–10.

Question.—When Jesus required the forgiveness of a wrong doer seven times in a day, for what did his disciples pray?

Answer.—Luke xvii. 5.

Q.—What did our Lord say to their request?

A.—Luke xvii. 6.

Q.—What would they not say to a servant just in from his field work?

A.—Luke xvii. 7.

Q.—What would they say to him?

A.—Luke xvii. 8.

NOTE. To gird oneself was to bind his loose clothing about him as a preparation to labor.

Q.—If the servant should obey these orders of his master, will his master thank him?

A.—Luke xvii. 9.

Q.—Why not?

Q.—What is a profitable servant?

Q.—After the disciples had exercised forgiveness and faith, what would they call themselves?

A.—Luke xvii. 10.

Q.—Why would they call themselves unprofitable servants?

A.—Luke xvii. 10.

NOTE. Christianity requires us to do more than can be exacted of us by law. If the coat was taken by legal promise, Jesus urged that the cloak should be *given*—the garment that could not be taken from a man, and which could not be kept after sundown even by a man to whom it had been pawned. Christianity asks for meritorious deeds as well as virtuous ones. It calls upon us for magnanimity as well as for the discharge of lawful duty.

——At St Stephen's church in Hull, England, a special service for the children has been held on the first Sunday in the new year for twenty-seven years. At this service a card containing an original hymn and an appropriate Bible text is given to each child, to be preserved as a motto for the year. On the first Sunday in 1872 the text thus given out was: "We love him because he first loved us." A sermon from this text was preached on the occasion by Rev. J. W. Gedge, diocesian inspector of schools for Surrey.

Hidden Seed

Enigma No. 1.

1. A ruler of the Jews.
2. Were used in war.
3. Was built by Solomon.
4. The birthplace of Abram.
5. A disciple of Paul.
6. A great king.
7. One of our first parents.
8. Was sent out of the ark.
9. A daughter-in-law of my whole.
10. A friend of Abram.
11. Father of James and John.
12. Father of John the Baptist.
13. Was killed by lightning.
14. Son of Peleg.

My whole was son and successor of Nabopolassar.

Bessie Putnam.

Enigma No. 2.

I am composed of seventeen letters.
My 15, 5, 16, 4, is one who sold his birthright.
My 9, 2, 11, 4, is a pronoun.
My 10, 3, 7, 6, was the father of Japheth.
My 13, 15, 1, 2, was a son of Adam.
My 12, 16, 14, 9, 17, 15, is that which we should never do.
My whole is one of the commandments. *B. E. D.*

Enigma No. 3.

1. Sued for their inheritance.
2. Israel's first judge.
3. Slew the great giant.

The ruler of the universe.

Answers.

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